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FOREIGN NEWS ON APPLES

THE CARDIFF APPLE MARKET

Cardiff is the import center and distributing point for practically all of South Wales, serving a population of more than two million people within a radius of thirty miles, and with more than ten million living within ninety miles. The Cardiff consular area is an industrial section and very little in the way of food is produced, so that importation is necessary. Large quantities of fresh fruits enter Cardiff for distribution through South Wales, including a great deal of fruit from the United States and Canada, the latter country alone contributing about 25,000 boxes of apples in 1924. That the United States should be able to increase its share in this business, is indicated by the fact that although five years ago there were no Canadian apples received in Cardiff at all, a substantial business is now being carried on. This has been brought about largely through efforts of the Canadian Government and Canadian transcontinental railroad companies, as well as by interested individuals.

Sales Organization.

There are thirty or forty importers, brokers, commission houses and large wholesalers in Cardiff who conduct this business, most of them belonging to an association for the control of their trade and for the securing of uniformity in dealings and prices, including a standardization of the various grades and qualities of fruit.

Methods of Marketing.

Many of these dealers receive importations direct from foreign countries, as well as from local fruit growers, while others buy from brokers and re-sell to the retail trade. Most of the fruit brought into this market is offered through an auction at which only members of the association may bid—a circumstance that has come unfavorably to the notice of the public through a series of articles now appearing in the local press—the fruit thus sold by auction being handled in most cases on a consignment and commission basis for the account of the grower. The advantages and disadvantages of the consignment system are of course well known. From the Cardiff marketman's standpoint, he is always dependent upon supplies out of whatever surplus there is in other markets, since growers will not sell on consignment when they have a certain market at home or elsewhere. In certain instances, as much as fifty per cent of the expected prices may be advanced to finance a shipper who is known to the

commission broker, and it is usual to guarantee the transportation charges. The transportation is paid, of course, by the shipper, and if advanced him by the broker, it is deducted later from the sales.

Commissions and Expenses.

It is generally the practice to auction the parcels of fruit before they leave the dock, enabling the wholesale merchant to receive them in his warehouse with but one drayage charge. The commission is 3%, plus a further charge of one shilling seven pence (38 cents) per barrel for barreled fruit, which includes 18 cents landing charges and 20 cents "additional profit" for the broker. On boxed fruit the commission is the same, but the additional charge is only 1 shilling two pence (28 cents).

Prices.

An idea of what an American grower might expect to receive through the auction, is given from the prices current during this last season, for apples. The prices here quoted are for Nova Scotia apples of various kinds:

Baldwins, Starks and Fallawaters brought for No. 1 grade \$7.85 per barrel, No. 2 and Domestic brought \$6.66 to \$7.14, and No. 3 brought \$5.71.

Yellow Newtowns from Oregon, Fancy apples, brought \$3.33 per case, choice apples \$3.09, and Extra Fancy \$3.57. From the consumers point of view, it would appear that the Yellow Newtown is the most favored apple, and usually brings the highest retail price.

The public, to whom the apples are sold by the pound pay 16 cents for the best apples, and 14, 13, and 10 cents for less choice ones. Cooking apples, mostly of British growth are supplied at from 6 to 8 cents. The greatest percentage of profit lies with the retailer who exists in such numbers that each has but a small portion of the trade in his neighborhood and has to charge a large price on what little he can sell, to make a modest living. The general unemployment conditions of this section are reflected in the large number of retail shops dividing the business that would be taken care of by less dealers if the surplus ones had something else to turn to.

The Season and Extent of Business.

Possibly the largest importer in the district states that 3000 barrels of apples per week are handled through the auction, during the shipping season, which begins in the last days of September and may continue until the end of January, provided fruit can be secured that late. American apples are largely represented in this amount, but Nova Scotia and Canadian apples are shipped extensively.

Certain dealers in Cardiff show a definite interest in American fruit. Careful observance of the most favorable marketing season, as in all European markets, and of the varieties and sizes desired, will go far toward making Cardiff a recognized market for American apples.

Note: The above report was prepared by Courtland Christiani, American Vice Consul at Cardiff, and secured from the Department of State.

